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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001890

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

AF/S FOR BNEULING  
AF/PD FOR RILEY SEVER  
DRL FOR MICHAEL ORONA  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVELLE, D. TEITELBAUM  
PARIS FOR C. NEARY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [KPAO](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: TEACHER UNION TRAVAILS

REF: HARARE 1734 AND PREVIOUS

[11.](#) (U) SUMMARY: On November 9, Raymond Majongwe, of the Progressive Teacher's Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) briefed the Ambassador on his recent visit to South Africa to participate in a workshop sponsored by the Center for Civic Education's CIVITAS program. Majongwe, a civil society activist who has been arrested and jailed numerous times, spoke about his participation in the CIVITAS workshop, his activism, and the difficulties for civic organizations in Zimbabwe. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (U) Majongwe is the founding Secretary General of PTUZ, a teacher-led union formed in 1997 when teachers decided that the existing, government-sponsored Zimbabwe Teachers Association did not serve their interests. PTUZ often opposes the GOZ and has brought several cases against the Ministry of Education or other government officials on behalf of teachers who have been abused. Majongwe, who is also a member of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), has been arrested several times for his participation in teachers' strikes and for conducting union meetings. Majongwe told the Ambassador that he expects PTUZ offices to be raided by police in the near future.

[13.](#) (SBU) From September 25 to October 9 Majongwe attended a CIVITAS workshop in South Africa. Majongwe was nominated by PAS Harare to CIVITAS. CIVITAS is a curriculum framework sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, which promotes civic education in schools. Majongwe said that he was very impressed with the civic and democratic values taught in South African schools and hoped Zimbabwe's schools could implement such a curriculum.

[14.](#) (SBU) Majongwe said it was very difficult for PTUZ to obtain meetings with government officials and that it was very difficult to have teachers' meetings in certain areas. According to Majongwe, the police have broken up PTUZ meetings and refused permission for meetings when PTUZ applied under the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). Majongwe said that 800 teachers who went on strike in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city and a stronghold of the opposition MDC, recently were denied their salaries. Majongwe characterized this as discrimination based on tribal affiliation, since only minority Ndebele teachers were penalized and majority Shona teachers who participated in the strike were not. The teachers were not notified of the suspension of pay nor given a hearing, and the GOZ simply contacted banks to stop payment. He added that the ILO was following this and other recent developments.

[15.](#) (SBU) Majongwe said that, based on increasing political influences in the schools and violence against teachers in the 2000 election, PTUZ initiated a Schools as Politics Free Zones campaign, partly supported by a Democracy and Human Rights Fund grant from the Embassy. In advance of the March 2005 elections, PTUZ was meeting with local leaders and government officials to attempt to prevent political rallies, at which teachers are often required to attend, from being held at schools and to prevent political violence against teachers.

[16.](#) (SBU) Majongwe said he expected the environment for PTUZ to become more difficult and more politicized as the elections approached and with the expected passage of the NGO bill (see refel). He said that it was likely that the GOZ, which sees PTUZ, along with organizations such as ZCTU, as a donor-sponsored organization intent on destabilizing the Government, could step up efforts under POSA and other laws to hamstring PTUZ operations and that PTUZ risked being deregistered as a trade union.

[17.](#) (SBU) COMMENT: Majongwe's description of his organization's difficulties in organizing and meeting with officials is another example of the obstacles unions and others in civil society face. Teachers are traditionally

seen in Zimbabwe as highly influential on children and generally respected by the community, so schools and teachers are strategic targets as the GOZ seeks to control information in the run-up the 2005 parliamentary elections. International image and relations with multilateral organizations may be a slowly growing priority for ZANU-PF, but Majongwe's report and the recent COSATU expulsion reinforce the reality that domestic political control remains its chief priority. END COMMENT.